

There are still too many Americans who know too little about Islam. Too often, stereotypes fill the vacuum ignorance creates. That kind of bigotry is wrong, has no place in American society. There is no place for intolerance against people of any faith—against Muslims or Jews or Christians or Buddhists or Baha'i—or any other religious group, or ethnic or racial group.

If America wishes to be a force for peace and reconciliation across religious and ethnic divides from the Middle East to Northern Ireland to the Balkans to Africa to Asia—if that is what we wish—if we wish to do good around the world, we must first be good here at home on these issues.

I ask all of you to help with that, to share the wellsprings of your faith with those who are different, to help people understand the values and the humanity that we share in common and the texture and fabric and fiber and core of the beliefs and practices of Islam.

Children do not come into the world hating people of different tribes and faiths. That is something they learn to do. They either are explicitly taught to do it, or they learn to do it by following the example of others, or they learn to do it in reaction to oppression that they, themselves, experience. And those of us who are adults have a responsibility to change those childhoods, to give this generation of children around the world a different future than so many have played out tragically in the last few years.

I think it is quite ironic that at the end of the cold war, when a system of atheistic, controlling communism has failed and been rejected, our latest demon seems to be the old-fashioned one of people fighting each other because they are of different religious faiths or racial or ethnic heritages. We know that is not at the core of any religious teaching. We know it is not at the core of Islam.

So I ask you again to rededicate yourselves in this coming year to making sure that others in this country truly understand and appreciate the faith you embrace, its practices, its beliefs, its precepts, and its inclusive humanity. [*Applause*] Thank you.

The Koran also teaches, in addition, to the fact that we should do unto others as we wish to have done to us, and reject for others what we would reject for ourselves, but we should

also make a commitment to live in peace. There is a new Moon that has risen at the end of Ramadan and a new millennium marked in many nations. And again, I say to you as we leave, in addition to your prayers and work for peace and understanding and reconciliation within the United States, I ask especially for your prayers for the current mission of peace in the Middle East.

We are on a track in which the Israelis, the Syrians, I hope soon the Lebanese, and already the Palestinians, have committed themselves to work through these very difficult, longstanding issues over the course of the next 2 months—the longstanding commitment between the Palestinians and the Israelis to resolve their business by next month. So this will be a time of great tension, where all people will have to search for wisdom and understanding, where there will be great reluctance to open the closed fist and walk out into a new era.

And I think that the prayers of Muslims, Jews, Christians, and people of good will all over the world will be needed for us to get through these next several weeks. But for you, I hope it is an immense source of pride that you live in a country that is trying to make peace in the land where your faith was born.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Naimah Saleem, who introduced the President; Yahya Hendi, chaplain, Georgetown University; and Capt. Rasheed Abdul-Muhammad, chaplain, USA.

Remarks Prior to Departure for Annapolis, Maryland, and an Exchange With Reporters

January 10, 2000

Normal Trade Relations Status for China

The President. Good afternoon. This year we face major challenges and opportunities in our relationship with China, in foreign and security policy, economic policy and trade. All those issues come together in one opportunity for the American people: what we

stand to gain when China enters the World Trade Organization.

But to lock in our benefits, we first must grant China permanent normal trade relations status. To get this done, I am directing John Podesta, my Chief of Staff, my international economic Cabinet members, my Policy Council coordinators, to launch an all-out effort. Each member of this team has a distinctive role to play. I'm asking them to do everything they can to accomplish the task.

To ensure that we have as strong and responsive an effort as possible in both parties in Congress, I'm asking Secretary of Commerce Bill Daley and my Deputy Chief of Staff, Steve Ricchetti, to lead our congressional effort.

This agreement is a good deal for America. Our products will gain better access to China's market in every sector from agriculture to telecommunications to automobiles. But China gains no new market access to the United States—nothing beyond what it already has. In fact, we'll gain tough new safeguards against surges of imports and maintain the strongest possible rules against dumping products that have hurt Americans in the past.

China's tariffs on United States goods, on the other hand, will fall by half or more over the next 5 years. And by joining the WTO, China agrees to play by the same trade rules that we do.

We continue to have serious disagreements with China on human rights, on proliferation, and other issues. We'll continue to press our views and protect our interests. This deal will not change China, or our relationship with China, overnight, but it is clearly a step in the right direction, and it is clearly in the short- and long-term best economic interests of the American working people.

It encourages China also to take further steps in the direction of both economic reform and respect for the rule of law. We want to see a China that is moving toward democracy at home and stability around the world. This agreement gives China's people access to goods and services, to ideas and innovations, that will help to promote those goals. It also gives China access to the World Trade

Organization membership, and that will help to promote those goals.

Bringing China into the WTO is a win-win decision. It will protect our prosperity, and it will promote the right kind of change in China. It is good for our farmers, for our manufacturers, and for our investors. Encouraging China to play by international rules, I say again, is an important step toward a safer, saner world.

I will be working hard over the coming weeks and over the coming months to make sure we do not let this opportunity slip away. I want to thank Secretary Daley and Mr. Ricchetti for agreeing to take on this important task. And we will do everything we can to succeed.

Thank you.

Q. What are the chances?

The President. Well, I think they're quite good if we can get a vote early in the year. I think this is something that is in the national interest. I have made it clear to the leaders of Congress that I strongly support it and that I think it should be scheduled for a vote at the earliest possible time. And if we do that, I think we've got an excellent chance to pass it.

Elian Gonzalez

Q. Mr. President, do you think that Congressman Burton is improperly interfering in the Elian Gonzalez case by issuing that subpoena? And are you troubled that Vice President Gore also thinks that the INS is not competent to make the decision and that it ought to be made by a judge in a court?

The President. Well, I believe that the INS made the decision it was charged to make according to the rules and laws that govern the INS. And if anyone wants to challenge that, the appropriate thing to do is to challenge it in a legal way. I don't have any comment about what Mr. Burton does or any judgment about it. I mean, it's always interesting.

Q. What about the Vice President?

The President. Well, anybody is free to express their opinion about this and whether they think they did right or wrong. What I have successfully done, I think, is to make sure we got through the decision without it becoming overly politicized. We allowed the

INS to review the facts, to interview the relevant parties, and to make a decision based on the law and regulations governing the INS. I think they did that to the best of their ability.

And as I said, if this were an American case, it would be handled in a family court, according to the best interests of the child. I think the INS tried to do what was right by the child, and I think that they did the best they could with a difficult and controversial situation. So I want to stand by them. And if anyone disagrees with them and they have some legal recourse, they ought to pursue the legal recourse. But again, I—and, of course, they can say they don't agree, but I think they did the best they could on the facts.

Israel-Syria Peace Talks

Q. Mr. President, how far do you think that they got in Shepherdstown, and when do you expect the two sides to get back together again?

The President. Oh, I think they'll be back here pretty soon. We're just trying to work out the precise arrangements. And, you know, these people really talked about the substance of their differences for the first time. They were very open; they were very candid; they covered all the issues. And I think that they broke a lot of ground. But it's tough. I told you it was tough in the beginning. I still think we can get there, but they're going to have to come back here determined to do so, and I believe they will.

Q. You're not disappointed, sir, in the results?

The President. Oh, no. I never expected in the first go 'round that we could have a concluding agreement. It's just—this is too tough. These are very difficult issues. But they're not—the good news is they're not overwhelmingly complicated. That is, sometimes you have in these peace negotiations issues that are both politically difficult and extremely complicated.

I think there's some complexity here, but it's all quite manageable. So I think that they know where they are now; they've talked through. They have a feeling for each other; they've dealt with all these issues. We have a working—a document, if you will, on which

we can work through the differences. And so I feel pretty good about it.

I think our United States team did a good job. I'm very proud of Secretary Albright and Mr. Berger and all the rest of them. They did a good job. And I think the people who came from Israel and from Syria really are trying to make a difference. So if they want to do it bad enough and they're willing to sort of take a chance on a totally different future, they can get there. And I certainly hope they will, and I'm still quite hopeful.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. You said you were hopeful with the Palestinian talks?

The President. Oh, very, yes.

Q. For next month?

The President. Yes. I'm quite hopeful there, too. Mr. Arafat is coming here in a few days, and I'm quite hopeful.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Elian Gonzalez, rescued off the coast of Florida on November 25, 1999, whose custody the Immigration and Naturalization Service decided in favor of his Cuban father; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks at Funeral Services for Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., in Annapolis January 10, 2000

Mouza, Ann, Mouzetta, Jim, James, Saralee, all the members of this wonderful family, and in the words of Ambassador Lader, this extended family: Hillary and I are honored to be here today to join in praising, remembering, and cherishing the life of a man who was our friend and whose love for his family, his Nation, and his Navy were as deep as the oceans he sailed.

Listening to Phil Lader talk about how Bud and Mouza first met brought back so many old memories to me and to those of us who had the privilege to listen to Bud Zumwalt tell that story. I became convinced that it was the reverse of the fish story, that every time he's told it, she said yes in a shorter and shorter amount of time. [Laughter]